

United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

WS Directive

2.615 03/20/06

WS FIREARM USE AND SAFETY

1. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the use of firearms in the conduct of official duties and to prescribe standard training requirements.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive revises WS Directive 2.615 dated 05/03/02.

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this directive, handguns, rifles, and shotguns are considered firearms. Suppressed firearms are those requiring a permit from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) (ATFF5 (5320.5)). This directive also covers pyrotechnics pistols, net guns, paint ball guns, dart guns, air rifles, arrow guns, and crossbows.

Wildlife Services (WS) personnel are considered to be all personnel employed by WS or under the supervision of WS including State employees and official volunteers.

4. POLICY

WS personnel are authorized to store, transport, carry, and use firearms necessary to perform official WS duties.

Use and possession of firearms must be in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. Because laws governing firearms vary geographically, WS personnel must be familiar with the laws of the State and locality in which they work and travel.

All firearms (i.e., handguns, rifles, and shotguns) used in the performance of official duties will be furnished with a locking device (e.g., trigger lock).

When firearms are not in immediate or eminent use in the field, they will be stored in accordance with this policy or transported out of public view and not in window racks of Government-owned, leased, or privately-owned vehicles leased or used for official Government business.

When at a location where access to a gun safe, vault, or cabinet is available, firearms will be removed from the vehicle for overnight storage in a locked gun safe, vault, or cabinet located within a secure building. When employees are on travel status and a gun safe, vault, or cabinet is unavailable, the firearms will be removed from the vehicle and stored within a secured room with a locking device (e.g., trigger lock) attached to the firearm. Deviations from this policy must be approved in writing by the appropriate Regional Director or the Director of the National Wildlife Research Center.

Firearms temporarily left in unattended vehicles will be stored out of public view and locked within a secured container affixed to the vehicle.

Firearms may be transported or carried in an accessible manner when immediate use is necessary or likely. Firearms will not have a cartridge in the chamber while being transported in a motor vehicle except where standardized procedures and guidelines have been established by the WS program and the specific procedures and guidelines concerning such practices are fully implemented (i.e., Sharpshooting Procedures/Guidelines for White-Tailed Deer Damage Management.)

Government-owned firearms are to be stored unloaded (no cartridge, shells, propellants, or projectiles in the chamber or magazine) whether in the employee's home, duty station, or government facility. Personal firearms must be maintained in the same manner when stored in a government office or facility. If they are not stored in a locked gun vault/cabinet, a locking device (e.g., trigger lock) must be attached to the firearm. It is recommended that personal firearms be maintained in this manner when stored in other locations such as the employee's residence. Pyrotechnic pistols, net guns, paint ball guns, dart guns, air rifles, arrow guns, and crossbows will be stored unloaded in a locked, secured location.

WS personnel will not carry concealed firearms on their person while on official duty unless authorized by the State Director or Field Station Leader and the appropriate regulatory licensing authority. Firearms will not be worn, carried, or used in an irresponsible, unsafe, or unprofessional manner.

Access to firearms stored in locked safes, gun vaults, or cabinets in government offices and other facilities will be limited to the State Director, Field Station or Project Leader, and/or their designee(s).

WS personnel who use firearms are subject to random drug testing as administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

All persons acting on behalf of WS who are required or requested to use firearms are subject to the Lautenburg Domestic Confiscation Law and are required to immediately inform their supervisor if they can no longer comply with the Lautenburg Domestic Confiscation Law.

Ammunition will be stored in a locked, secure location.

5. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

All WS personnel, regardless of employment status, and official volunteers who are required or requested to use firearms in the conduct of official duties will be provided firearm safety and handling training as prescribed in the WS Firearms Safety Manual. New employees must be provided such training or have completed a State hunter safety course or other approved firearms safety training course within the last year prior to using firearms on the job. Continuing education training on firearm safety and handling will be taken biennially by all employees who use firearms. State Directors are responsible for ensuring that employees receive firearms safety and handling instruction as prescribed in the WS Firearms Safety Training Manual. Training must be documented using an SF-182, Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training, or similar training form.

Aerial gunner training will consist of instruction from the WS Firearm Safety Training Manual as well as other specialized instruction that may be contained in the WS Aviation Operations Manual, the WS Aviation Safety Program Manual, and the WS Aerial Operation Crew Member Training Manual.

6. REFERENCES

President Clinton's Memorandum on Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns (03/05/97).

APHIS Safety and Health Manual (02/27/98 rev.).

MRP Drug Free Workplace Program Handbook, MRP 4792.1 (April 2001).

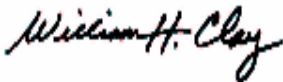
Lautenburg Domestic Confiscation Law (18 U.S.C. 922).

WS Firearms Safety Training Manual.

WS Aviation Operations Manual (04/09/01).

WS Aerial Operations Crew Member Training Manual.

WS Aviation Safety Program Manual.



Deputy Administrator